



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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### HB 2871: OPEN EDUCATION RESOURCES

Passed during the 2015 legislative session, HB 2871 provides a \$700,000 appropriation in the area of textbook affordability with a specific focus on the development of Open Educational Resources (OERs). The bill sponsored by the House Committee on Higher Education, Innovation and Workforce Development includes four key components:

- Establishes the OER Grant Program within the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC);
- Requires the HECC to employ an OER Resource Specialist;
- Requires public postsecondary institutions to prominently designate courses whose course materials exclusively consist of open or free textbooks or other low-cost or no-cost course materials; and
- Directs the HECC in coordination with public postsecondary institutions to identify OERs for 15 courses that are in high-enrollment, general educational disciplines and that are capable of being transferred among public postsecondary institutions.

### OER STEERING COMMITTEE

In an effort to ensure the intentional leveraging of resources, the HECC has formed the OER Steering Committee. The Committee, consisting of members representing librarians, faculty, administrators, students and bookstores will assist in providing advice and guidance to HECC staff regarding the development of the Request for Proposals for the OER Grant Program and other matters as work moves forward. The first meeting of the Committee is scheduled for November 30, 2015.

### OER GRANT PROGRAM

As mentioned above, the OER Grant Program will be designed under the guidance and advice of the OER Steering Committee. The program will work to maximize the use of existing resources and activities within in Oregon and across the nation in the area of OERs. It is anticipated that the RFP will be released in late winter with institutions being selected in early spring.

## **OER RESOURCE SPECIALIST**

Work is underway to fill the position as identified by the legislation. The HECC anticipates opening the position in December with hiring being completed near the first of the year. This position will work very closely with other OER resource specialists throughout the state to leverage activities and resources to ensure the greatest possible outcome for the HB 2871 funding allocation.

## **COURSE DESIGNATION**

While course catalogs are produced at each individual institution, the HECC will look to the OER Steering Committee to make recommendations regarding statewide codes that may be considered by institutions as they designate courses whose course materials exclusively consist of open or free textbooks or other low-cost or no-cost course materials. The completion of these recommendations is anticipated in late winter to allow time for institutions consider them for incorporation in the 2016-17 academic year.

## **DEVELOPMENT OER COURSES**

In preparation for the first OER Steering Committee, staff has begun to research which courses meet the criteria of being in high-enrollment, general educational disciplines and may be capable of being transferred. Upon preliminary analysis, these courses appear to be in disciplines such as writing, psychology, sociology, biology and math. This information should be very valuable as HECC begins to outline the grant program and corresponding RFP.

In addition, the HECC has developed a webpage framework to house course textbooks and corresponding materials. This webpage will be accessible by anyone wishing to use the OER content that is developed through the OER Grant program. The webpage can be accessed within the HECC Resources at: <http://www.oregon.gov/HigherEd/Pages/oer.aspx>